IDW
#8 • CVR A
SAM KIETH • WILLIAM MESSNER-LOEBS
THE MAXX
maxximized
This eye is too HIGH.
This One Too LOW.
JAW IS UN-even.
IMPerfections of a JUNGLE Queen

THE MAXX MAXXIMIZED

WRITTEN BY
SAM KIETH (STORY) AND
WILLIAM MESSNER-LOEBS (SCRIPT)

ARTWORK BY
SAM KIETH

FINISHES BY
JIM SINCLAIR

COLORS BY
RONDA PATTISON

LETTERS BY
MIKE HEISLER

EDITS BY
SCOTT DUNBIER

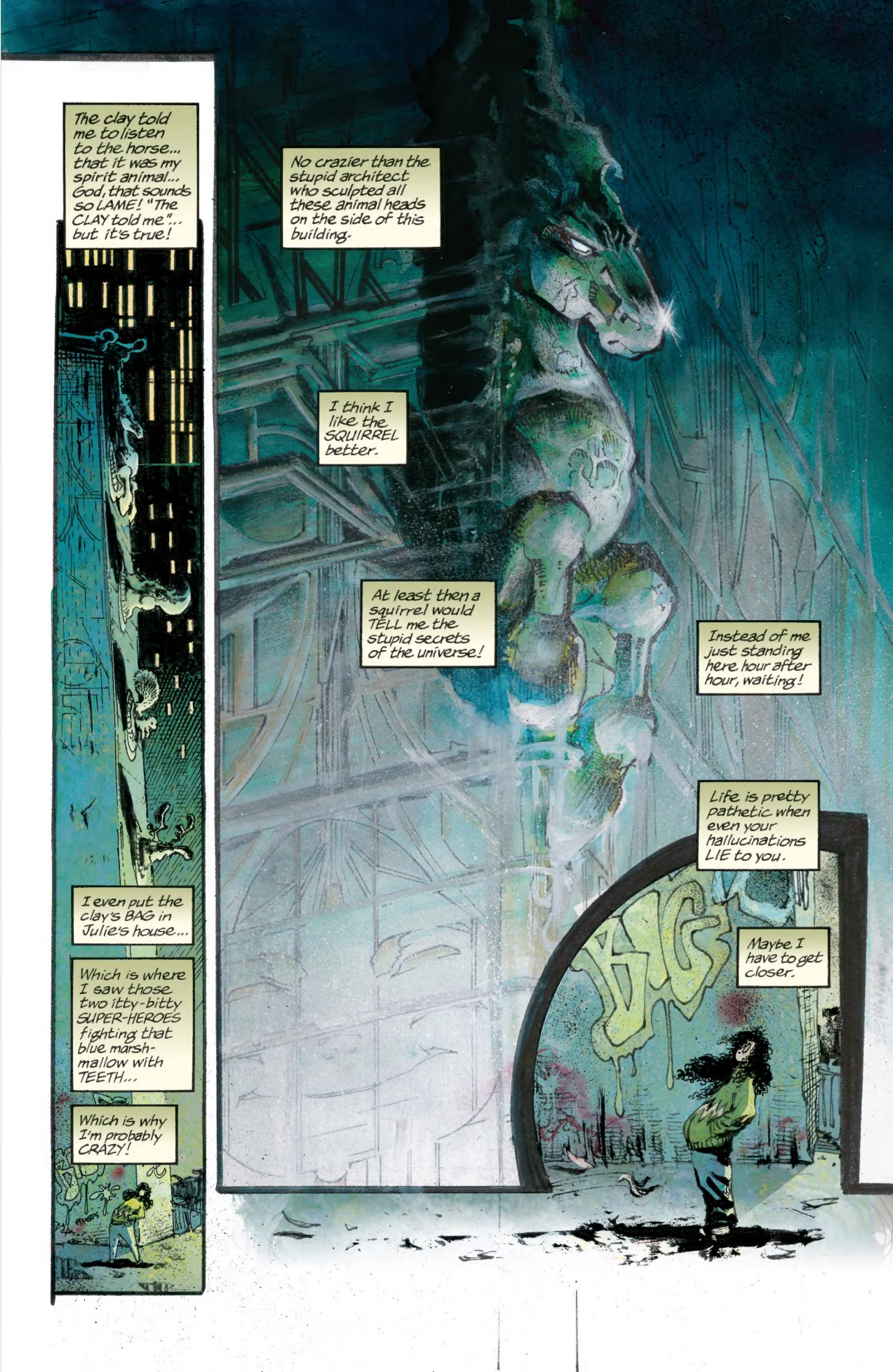
THE MAXX created by Sam Kieth • Production Assistance by Chris Mowry

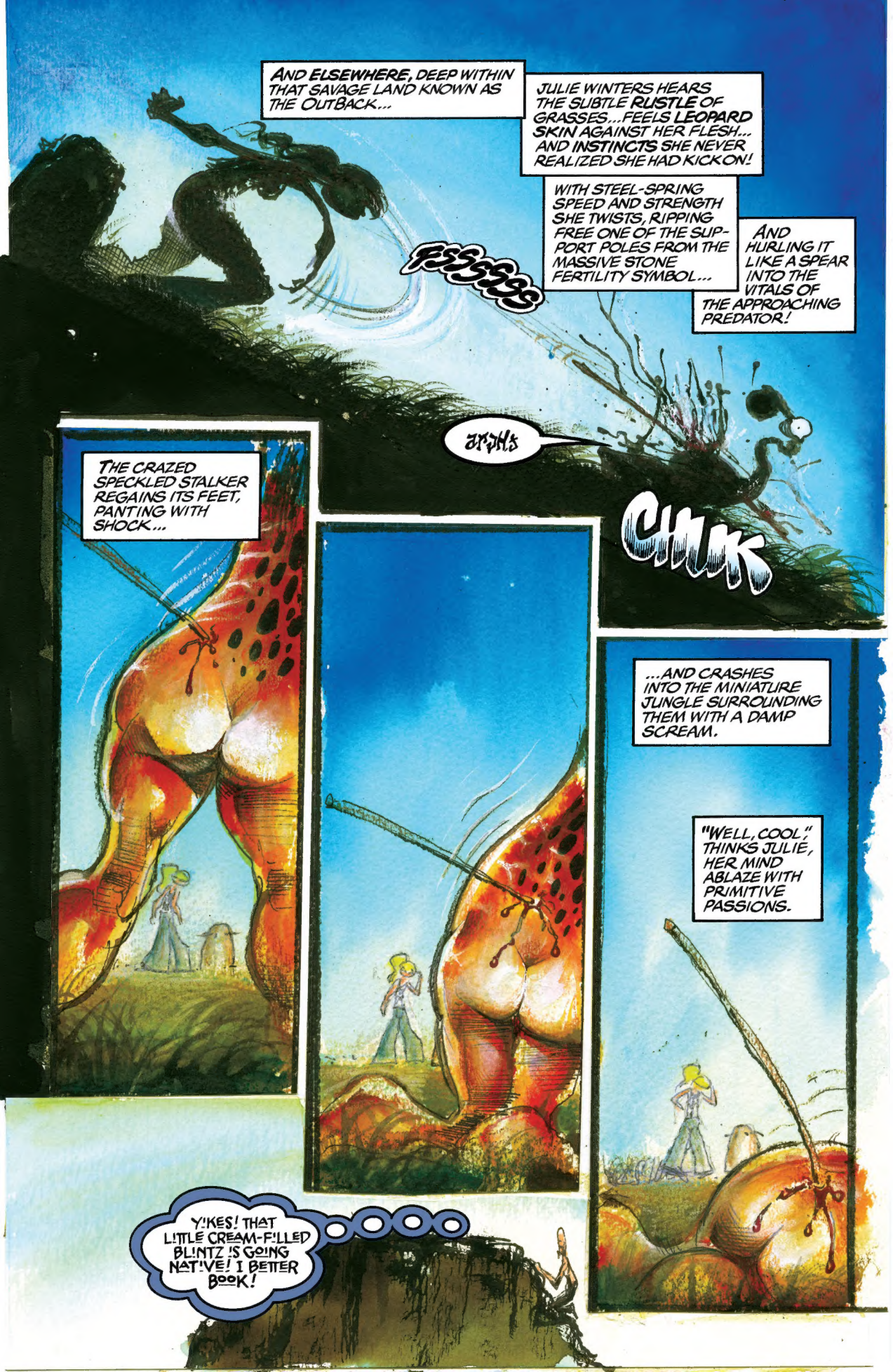
IDW®
www.IDWPUBLISHING.com
IDW founded by Ted Adams, Alex Garner, Kris Oprisko, and Robbie Robbins

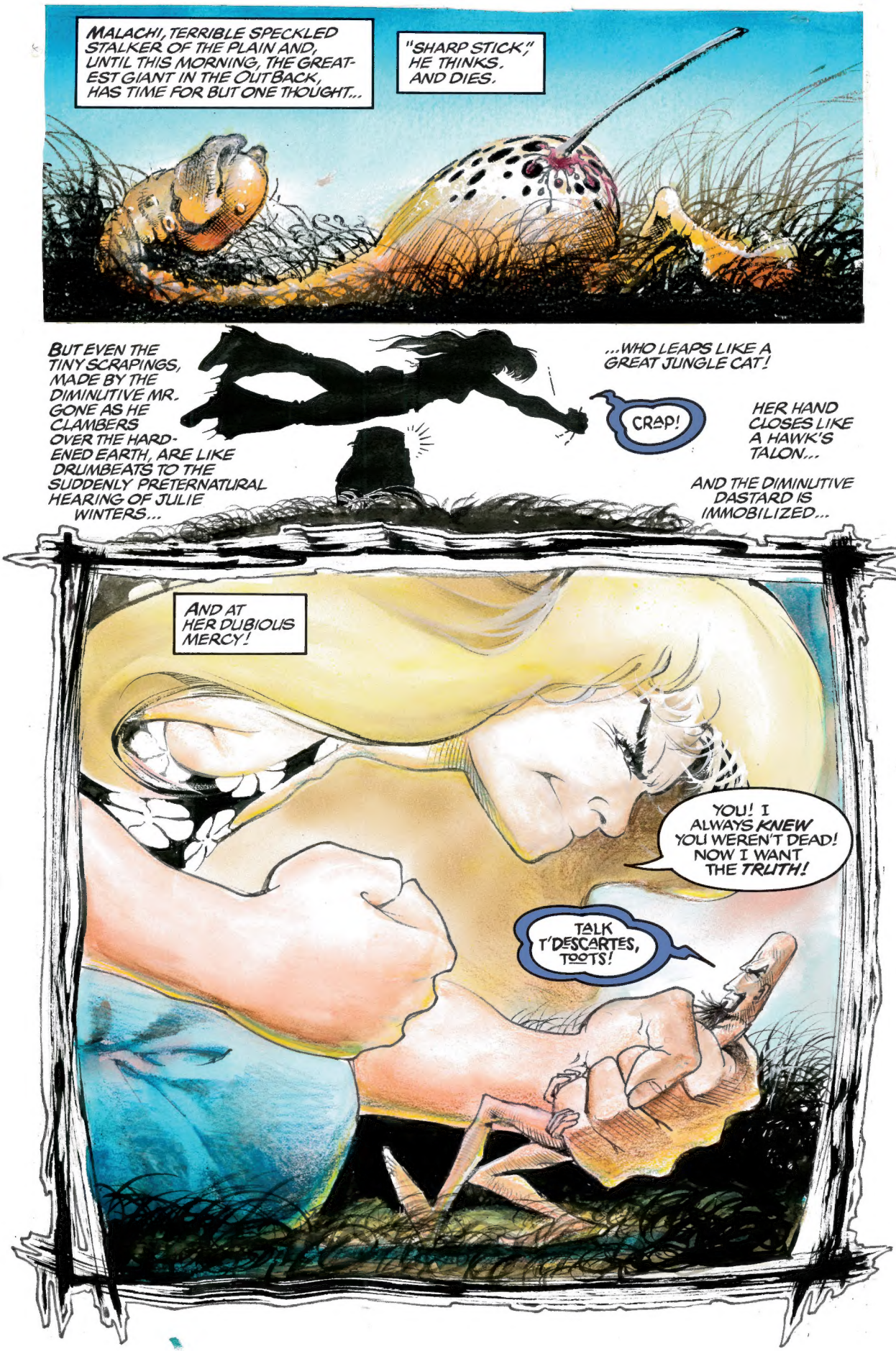
Ted Adams, CEO & Publisher
Greg Goldstein, President & COO
Robbie Robbins, EVP/Sr. Graphic Artist
Chris Ryall, Chief Creative Officer/Editor-in-Chief
Matthew Ruzicka, CPA, Chief Financial Officer
Alan Payne, VP of Sales
Dirk Wood, VP of Marketing
Lorelei Bunjes, VP of Digital Services
Jeff Webber, VP of Digital Publishing & Business Development

Facebook: facebook.com/idwpublishing
Twitter: @idwpublishing
YouTube: youtube.com/idwpublishing
Instagram: instagram.com/idwpublishing
deviantART: idwpublishing.deviantart.com
Pinterest: pinterest.com/idwpublishing/idw-staff-faves

THE MAXX: MAXXIMIZED #8. JUNE 2014. FIRST PRINTING. THE MAXX is TM & © 2014 Sam Kieth. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. THE PITT is © 2014 Dale Keown. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. © 2014 Idea and Design Works, LLC. All rights reserved. IDW Publishing, a division of Idea and Design Works, LLC. Editorial offices: 5080 Santa Fe Street, San Diego CA 92109. The IDW logo is registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Any similarities to persons living or dead are purely coincidental. With the exception of artwork used for review purposes, none of the contents of this publication may be reprinted without the permission of Idea and Design Works, LLC. IDW Publishing does not read or accept unsolicited submissions of ideas, stories, or artwork. Printed in Korea.


The clay told me to listen to the horse... that it was my spirit animal... God, that sounds so LAME! "The CLAY told me"... but it's true!
No crazier than the stupid architect who sculpted all these animal heads on the side of this building.
I think I like the SQUIRREL better.
At least then a squirrel would TELL me the stupid secrets of the universe!
Instead of me just standing here hour after hour, waiting!
Life is pretty pathetic when even your hallucinations LIE to you.
Maybe I have to get closer.
I even put the clay's BAG in Julie's house...
Which is where I saw those two itty-bitty SUPER-HEROES fighting that blue marsh-mallow with TEETH...
Which is why I'm probably CRAZY!


AND ELSEWHERE, DEEP WITHIN THAT SAVAGE LAND KNOWN AS THE OUTBACK...
JULIE WINTERS HEARS THE SUBTLE RUSTLE OF GRASSES...FEELS LEOPARD SKIN AGAINST HER FLESH... AND INSTINCTS SHE NEVER REALIZED SHE HAD KICK ON!
WITH STEEL-SPRING SPEED AND STRENGTH SHE TWISTS, RIPPING FREE ONE OF THE SUPPORT POLES FROM THE MASSIVE STONE FERTILITY SYMBOL...
AND HURLING IT LIKE A SPEAR INTO THE VITALS OF THE APPROACHING PREDATOR!
FSSSSS
ARGH!
CHUK
THE CRAZED SPECKLED STALKER REGAINS ITS FEET, PANTING WITH SHOCK...
...AND CRASHES INTO THE MINIATURE JUNGLE SURROUNDING THEM WITH A DAMP SCREAM.
"WELL, COOL," THINKS JULIE, HER MIND ABLAZE WITH PRIMITIVE PASSIONS.
Y!KES! THAT L!TTLE CREAM-F!LLED BL!NTZ !S GO!NG NAT!VE! I BETTER BOOK!


MALACHI, TERRIBLE SPECKLED STALKER OF THE PLAIN AND, UNTIL THIS MORNING, THE GREATEST GIANT IN THE OUTBACK, HAS TIME FOR BUT ONE THOUGHT...
"SHARP STICK," HE THINKS. AND DIES.
BUT EVEN THE TINY SCRAPINGS, MADE BY THE DIMINUTIVE MR. GONE AS HE CLAMBERS OVER THE HARDENED EARTH, ARE LIKE DRUMBEATS TO THE SUDDENLY PRETERNATURAL HEARING OF JULIE WINTERS...
...WHO LEAPS LIKE A GREAT JUNGLE CAT!
CRAP!
HER HAND CLOSES LIKE A HAWK'S TALON...
AND THE DIMINUTIVE DASTARD IS IMMOBILIZED...
AND AT HER DUBIOUS MERCY!
YOU! I ALWAYS KNEW YOU WEREN'T DEAD! NOW I WANT THE TRUTH!
TALK T'DESCARTES, TOOTS!

AND YET ELSEWHERE, IN THE SUDDENLY HUGE APARTMENT OF JULIE WINTERS...
MAXX IS TRIUMPHANT OVER THE RAVENOUS PIRANOSAURUS! HE IS TRULY LORD OF THE JUNGLE! AS IS HIS BROTHER, PITT!
GIVE IT A REST, MAXX. THERE'S SOMETHING NUTS HERE, AND I MEAN T'SCOPE IT OUT!

BUT FIRST WE MUST RID OURSELVES OF THIS DAEMONIC BEAST! AND MAXX HAS A PLAN!
BIG GULP
OH, GOD.
NO, THIS BE GOOD PLAN.
UHHHH
MAXX, WHY IS IT I GOTTA BE OUT HERE, SUPPLYING... UHH... ALL TH' MUSCLE?

WHILE YOU SIT BACK THERE?
UH, MAXX...? I THINK THE DINGUS IS WRIGGLIN' FREE!
MAXX IS STEADYING.
YEAH, RIGHT.
BROTHER PITT NOT WORRY! MAXX IS COMING!
NO, MAXX... WHATEVER YOU DO...FOR GOD'S SAKE...
DON'T LET...
GO
OOPS!

BROTHER PITT LOOKED MAD AS HE SAIL AWAY.
WHO'S OUT THERE? I CAN HEAR SOMEONE...
MAXX?
ARE YOU OUT THERE, MAXX? I'M STILL LOCKED IN THIS BATHROOM.
YOU'VE GOT TO SAVE ME, MAXX!
I AM COMING, JULIE!
MAXX... YOUR MASK...
...IT'S FALLEN...
YOU'RE...
...YOU'RE A...
OH GOD

WOW!

LOOK AT THOSE IZZES EAT!

I SURE AM GLAD YOU SNAPPED OUT OF IT AND PULLED ME UP AT THE LAST SECOND!

ME TOO.

OOF.

HEY! THAT'S PRETTY GOOD!

WHEN YOU GET HELP, YOU CAN COME BACK FOR ME.

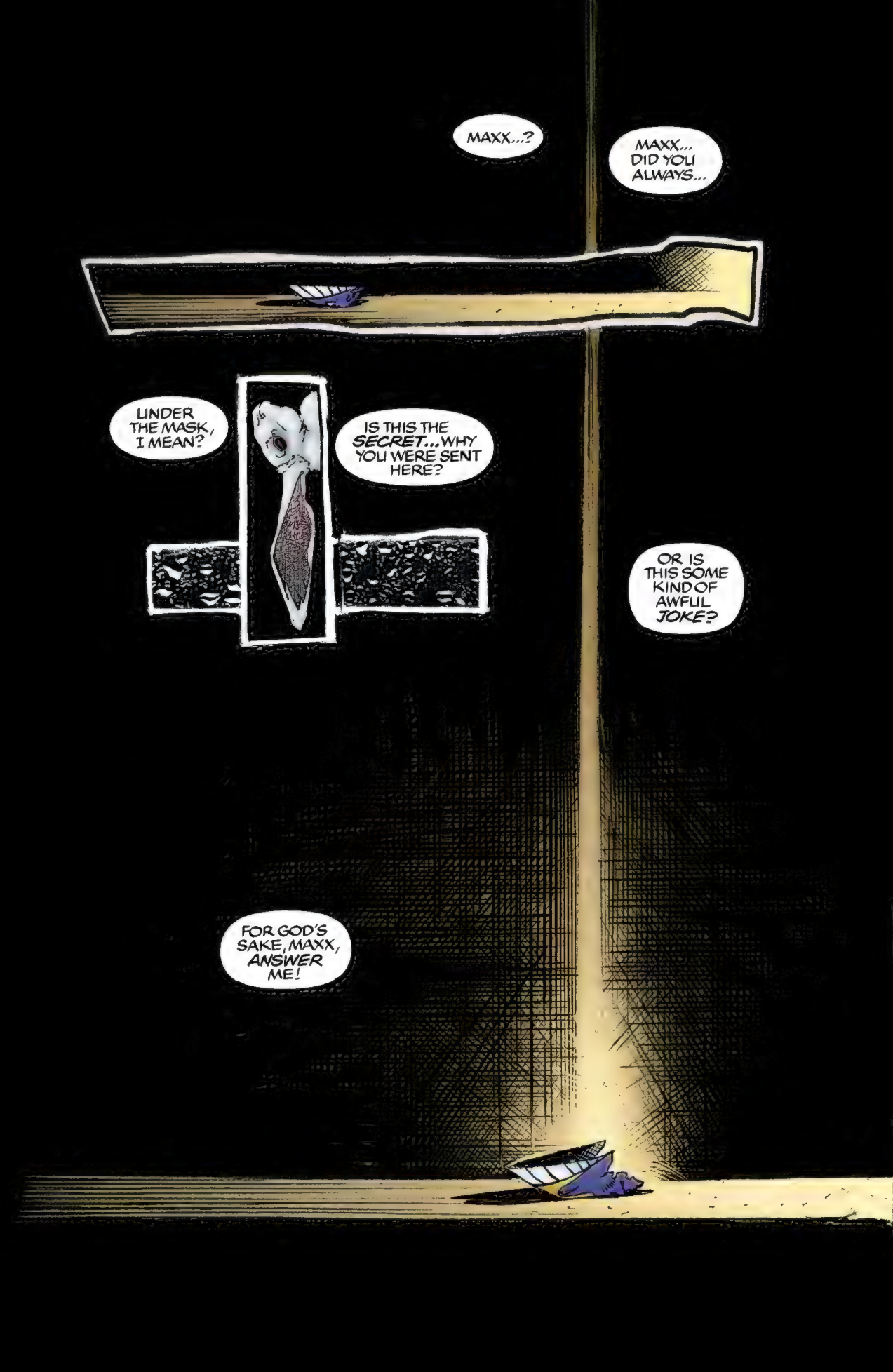
RIGHT, MAXX?

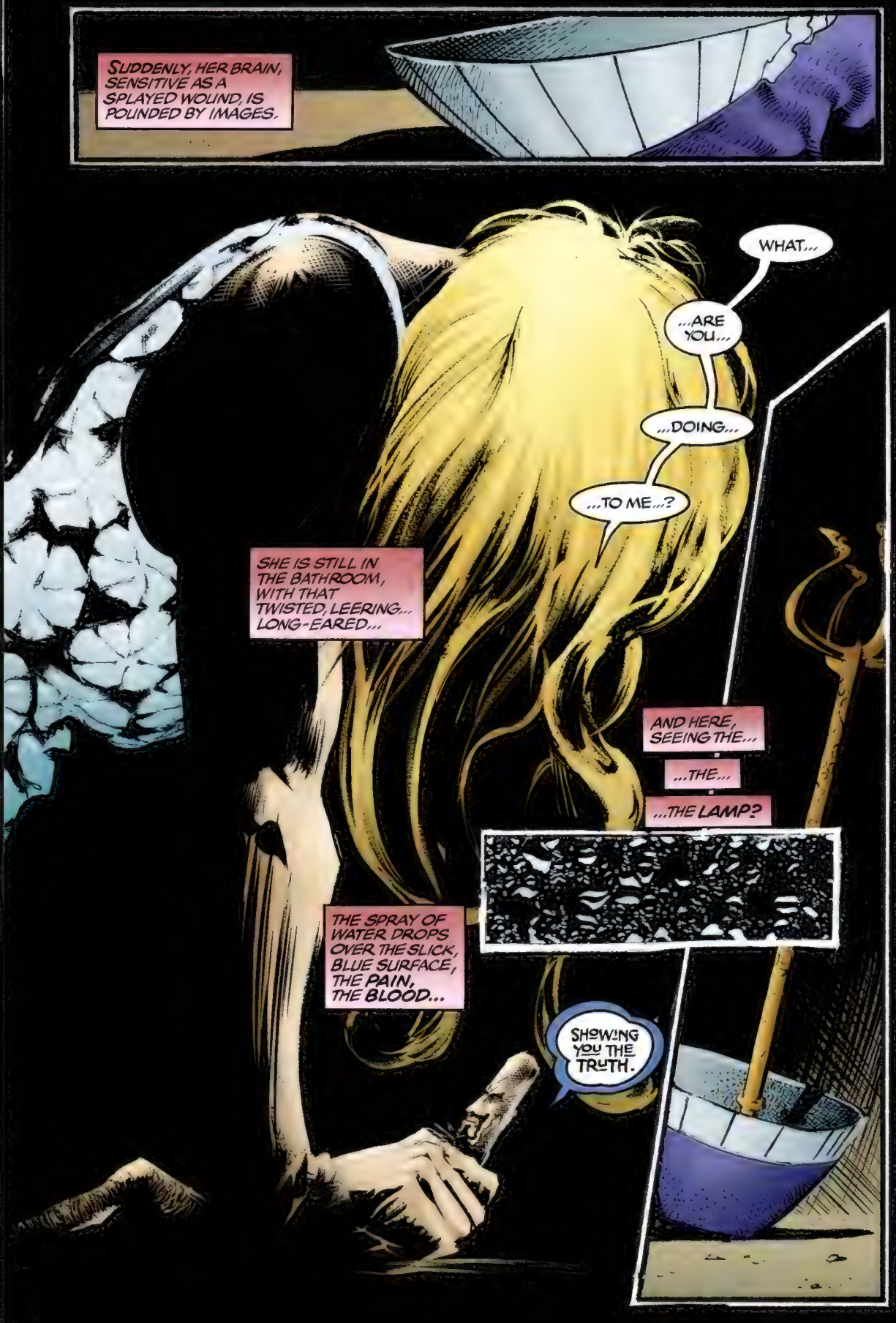
MAXX?

GODDAM YOU, MAXX!

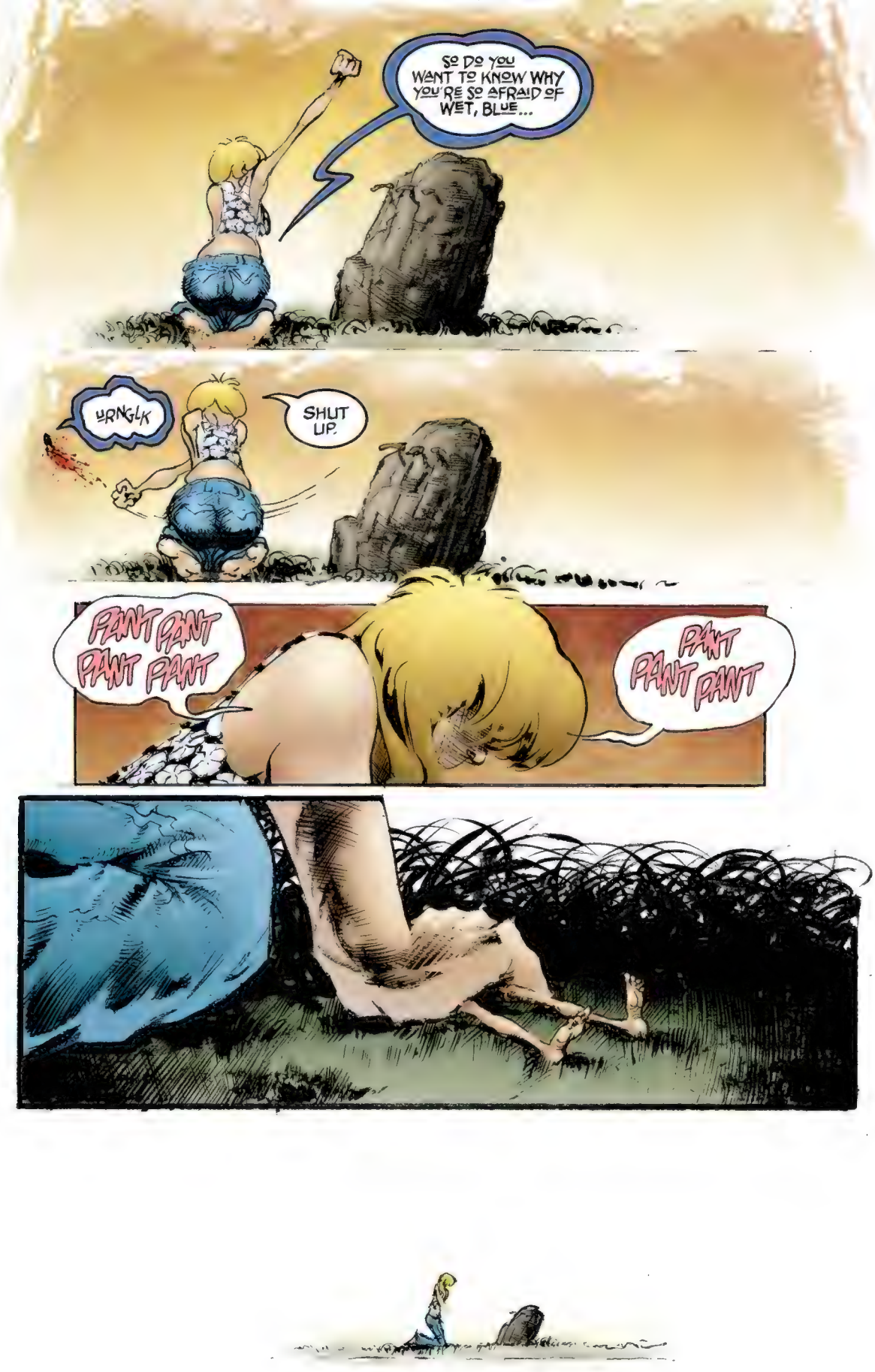
NOTHING'S HAPPENING.
NO *INSIGHTS*, NO *FLASHBACKS*, NO NEAT EXPLANATIONS OF WHY MY LIFE IS SO MISERABLE. NO *NOTHING*.

WHAT KIND OF LAME SPIRIT ANIMAL ARE YOU ANYWAY?
I MEAN, I'M HERE, I'M LISTENING. SAY SOMETHING!
OR ARE YOU JUST PART OF THE USUAL CON, WHERE A HORSE TELLS YOU, "LIFE IS IMPORTANT," "GET HIGH ON LIFE," "HORSES TALK," AND IT'S ALL JUST CRAP?
'COURSE THE ONLY THING STUPIDER THAN A TALKING GRANITE HORSE IS A GIRL WHO LOOKS TO ONE FOR ANSWERS.

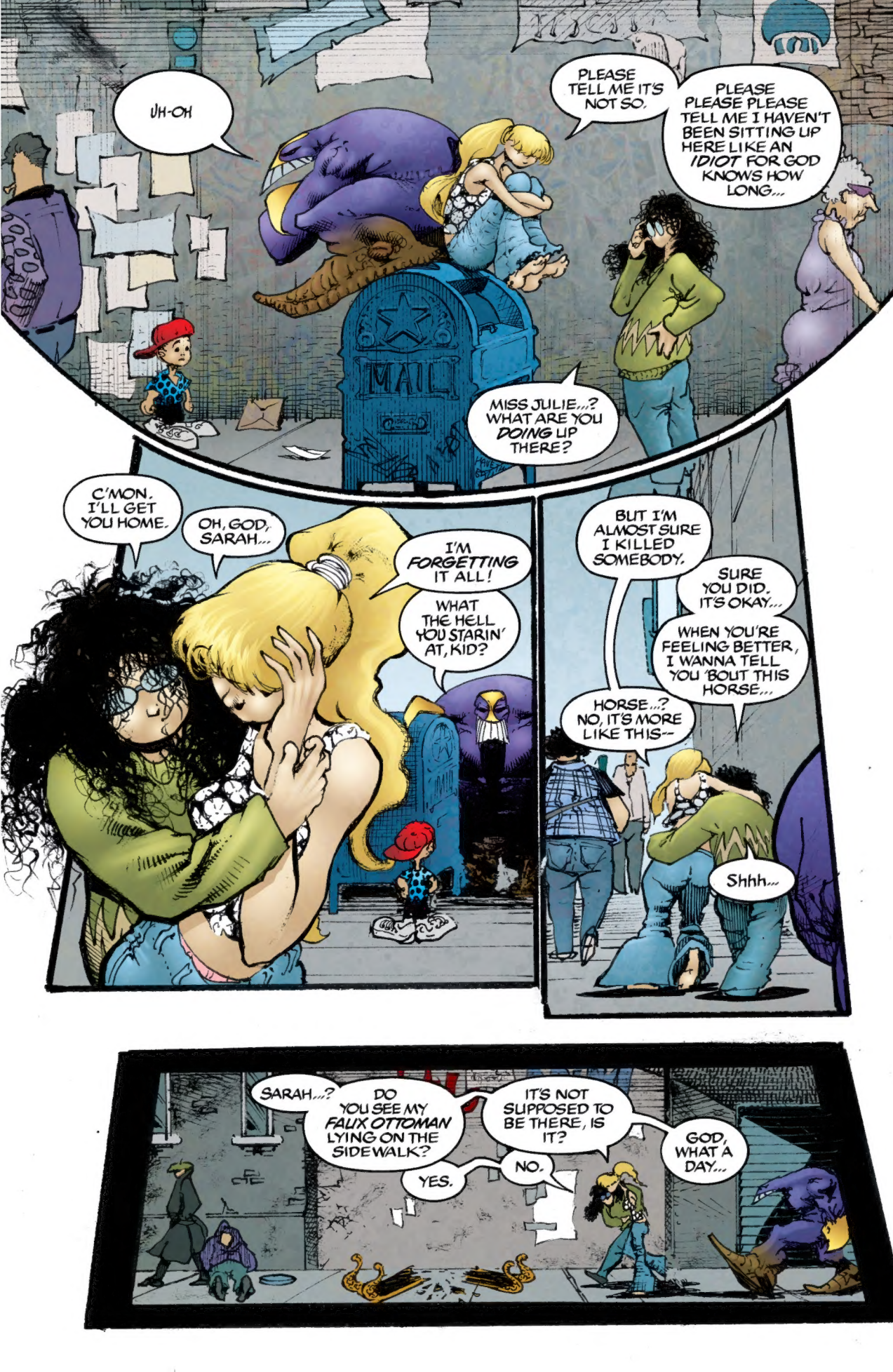

MAXX...?
MAXX... DID YOU ALWAYS...
UNDER THE MASK, I MEAN?
IS THIS THE SECRET... WHY YOU WERE SENT HERE?
OR IS THIS SOME KIND OF AWFUL JOKE?
FOR GOD'S SAKE, MAXX, ANSWER ME!

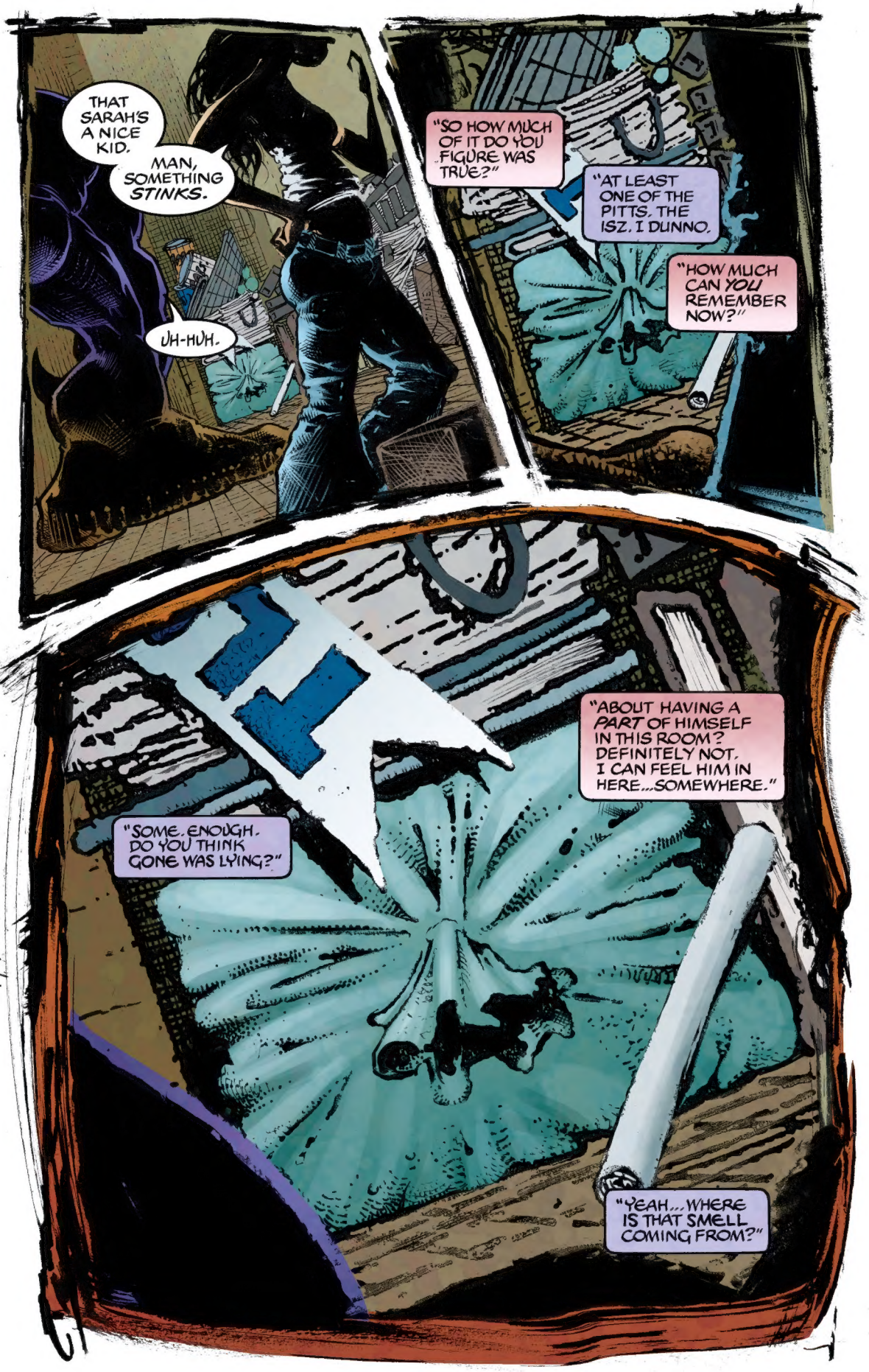

SUDDENLY, HER BRAIN, SENSITIVE AS A SPLAYED WOUND, IS POUNDED BY IMAGES.
WHAT...
...ARE YOU...
...DOING...
...TO ME...?
SHE IS STILL IN THE BATHROOM, WITH THAT TWISTED, LEERING... LONG-EARED...
AND HERE, SEEING THE...
...THE...
...THE LAMP?
THE SPRAY OF WATER DROPS OVER THE SLICK, BLUE SURFACE, THE PAIN, THE BLOOD...
SHOWING YOU THE TRUTH.

HOW... DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT? HOW DO... YOU KNOW ABOUT EVERYTHING?
VERY SIMPLE.
A PART OF ME IS PROJECTED INTO THE OTHER WORLD... INTO YOUR HOME. I'M THERE RIGHT NOW... LISTENING.
THAT'S HOW I KNOW THAT THE OUTBACK IS GETTING SMALLER AND SMALLER...
STOP THIS! IT HURTS!
AH. AND I THOUGHT THIS WAS WHAT YOU WANTED. DID YOU SEE IT? BEHIND THE MASK?
"WHILE THE WORLD OF THE CITY IS GROWING! IT'S ALL UNBALANCED!
"WHEN YOU SPOKE TO YOUR OTHER SELVES YESTERDAY, YOU DAMAGED THE BARRIERS!
"I'D EXPLAIN MORE, BUT YOU HAVE A NASTY HABIT OF CUTTING OFF MY HEAD WHEN I TELL YOU THE TRUTH!"


SO DO YOU WANT TO KNOW WHY YOU'RE SO AFRAID OF WET, BLUE...
URNGLK
SHUT UP.
PANT PANT PANT PANT
PANT PANT PANT

I WONDER IF THIS MEANS I'VE REALLY BEEN HANGING OFF THE STRUT OF A GOODYEAR BLIMP FOR THE LAST 15 MILES?
DO YOU KNOW HOW HARD IT IS TO CATCH AN AIRWHALE GOING IN THIS DIRECTION?
KHUMP!
GREAT. NOW WE'RE STUCK IN A MILLION MILES OF PRIMORDIAL WILDERNESS.
BITCH, BITCH, BITCH.


UH-OH
PLEASE TELL ME IT'S NOT SO.
PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE TELL ME I HAVEN'T BEEN SITTING UP HERE LIKE AN *IDIOT* FOR GOD KNOWS HOW LONG...
MAIL
MISS JULIE...? WHAT ARE YOU *DOING* UP THERE?
C'MON. I'LL GET YOU HOME.
OH, GOD, SARAH...
I'M *FORGETTING* IT ALL!
WHAT THE HELL YOU STARIN' AT, KID?
BUT I'M ALMOST SURE I KILLED SOMEBODY.
SURE YOU DID. IT'S OKAY...
WHEN YOU'RE FEELING BETTER, I WANNA TELL YOU 'BOUT THIS HORSE...
HORSE...? NO, IT'S MORE LIKE THIS--
Shhh...
SARAH...?
DO YOU SEE MY *FAUX OTTOMAN* LYING ON THE SIDEWALK?
YES.
IT'S NOT SUPPOSED TO BE THERE, IS IT?
NO.
GOD, WHAT A DAY...


THAT SARAH'S A NICE KID.
MAN, SOMETHING STINKS.
UH-HUH.
"SO HOW MUCH OF IT DO YOU FIGURE WAS TRUE?"
"AT LEAST ONE OF THE PITTS, THE ISZ. I DUNNO.
"HOW MUCH CAN YOU REMEMBER NOW?"
"ABOUT HAVING A PART OF HIMSELF IN THIS ROOM? DEFINITELY NOT. I CAN FEEL HIM IN HERE...SOMEWHERE."
"SOME. ENOUGH. DO YOU THINK GONE WAS LYING?"
"YEAH... WHERE IS THAT SMELL COMING FROM?"

So, here I am again, Mr. Ed. This is the THIRD week. I dunno...
Suddenly it happens.
In a single word the horse's voice reveals EVERYTHING.
It's not about the CLAY or a HORSE... it's not about anyone in school, Mom, Dad, Julie or even Maxx.
Oh God... I feel like my insides are turning to jelly...
I'm starting to shake...
...letting my guard down too fast... I need time...
...it's too much... ripping right through me...
Maybe that's why I'm crying. It's all so real now. It's all REAL!
NEXT ISSUE: HEAD TRIPPING AND JUNGLE ROT